

Message Text

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ACTION ICAE-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 PA-02 INR-10 ACDA-12 /037 W
-----054768 141633Z /41

O 141611Z JUN 78
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2281
AMEMBASSY BONN

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FOR FERNANDEZ FROM CLAUSSEN

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: "ATLANTIC NEWS" REPORT ON MBFR

1. FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARED IN "ATLANTIC NEWS" DATED 14
JUNE 1978. BEGIN TEXT:

EAST PRESENTS NEW INITIATIVE ON "MBFR"

(A.N. - N.A.) - DURING THE 172ND PLENARY SESSION OF THE
15TH ROUND OF THE VIENNA MBFR NEGOTIATIONS ON FORCE
REDUCTION IN CENTRAL EUROPE, ON 8 JUNE, THE WARSAW PACT
COUNTRIES PRESENTED A "NEW INITIATIVE" WHICH, ACCORDING
TO A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EAST, TAKES ACCOUNT OF THE LATEST
NATO INITIATIVE.

THE DETAILS OF THIS NEW INITIATIVE BY THE EAST WILL NOT
BE FORMALLY DISCUSSED AT NATO BEFORE FRIDAY, WHEN THE
ATLANTIC COUNCIL WILL MEET IN BRUSSELS IN THE PRESENCE
OF MEMBERS OF THE NATO AD HOC GROUP IN VIENNA; HOWEVER,
THE FIRST REACTIONS OF THE ALLIANCE CIRCLES INDICATE
THAT THE NATO COUNTRIES, CONTRARY TO THE OPINION OF THE
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SOCIALIST NEGOTIATORS, DO NOT REGARD THIS NEW PACT
PROPOSAL AS AN OVERALL SOLUTION TO END THE DEADLOCK IN
THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT YIELDED ANY CONCRETE
RESULTS SINCE THEY BEGAN FIVE YEARS AGO.

THE PACT'S INITIATIVE, WHICH IS REGARDED AS A COUNTER-
PROPOSAL BY THE EAST TO THE LATEST NATO PROPOSAL, RATHER

THAN A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE LATTER, IS HOWEVER VERY AMBIGUOUS. ALTHOUGH AT FIRST SIGHT THE EAST SEEMS TO BE IN AGREEMENT WITH NATO OVER CERTAIN ELEMENTS FOR REACHING A FIRST PHASE AGREEMENT, ACCORDING TO NATO SOURCES, THE TERMS USED BY THE EAST IN ITS COUNTER-PROPOSAL ARE EQUIVOVAL. CONSEQUENTLY, SEVERAL MONTHS OF DISCUSSION AND FURTHER EXPLANATION WILL BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ASSESS PRECISELY THE EXTENT OF THE EASTERN REACTION TO THE ALLIED INITIATIVE, IT IS THOUGHT AT NATO.

HERE ARE THE OUTLINES OF THE WARSAW PACT'S INITIATIVE:

(A) - THE PACT COUNTRIES ARE AGREED THAT, BY MEANS OF GRADUAL REDUCTIONS, COMMON CEILINGS SHOULD BE REACHED FOR EITHER SIDE'S FORCES IN THE REDUCTION ZONE IN CENTRAL EUROPE (IE THE TERRITORY OF THE FRG, BENELUX, GDR, POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA). THE PACT COUNTRIES AGREE WITH NATO THAT TWO CEILINGS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED: A CEILING OF 900 000 MEN ON EITHER SIDE OUT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FORCES, AND A SUB-CEILING OF 700 000 MEN WHERE GROUND FORCES ARE CONCERNED. HOWEVER, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHICH TROOPS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THESE TWO CEILINGS.

ACCORDING TO THE EAST, THE CEILING OF 700 000 MEN WILL CONCERN "GROUND TROOPS" (ACCORDING TO THE NATO DEFINITION, THIS CEILING WILL INCLUDE ALL "GROUND FORCES") AND THE OTHER 200 000 WILL COMPRISE "SUPPORTING UNITS" (ACCORD-
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ING TO NATO'S DEFINITION, THIS 200 000 ELEMENT CONCERNS "AIR FORCES"). IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THE "DEFINITION OF FORCES" FOR A VERY LONG TIME (MAINLY BECAUSE CERTAIN TASKS CARRIED OUT BY CIVILIANS IN THE WESTERN ARMED FORCES ARE FULFILLED BY MILITARY STAFF IN THE EAST, AND THE CONCEPT OF SPECIALIZED FORCES SUCH AS BORDER GUARDS, ETC DIFFER ON EITHER SIDE), THE EAST'S APPARENT AGREEMENT ON THE QUESTION OF CEILINGS REMAINS TO BE DEFINED.

(B) - FURTHERMORE, THE EAST'S INITIATIVE, WHILE RECOGNIZING THE CONCEPT OF COMMON CEILINGS, DOES NOT APPEAR TO ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF COLLECTIVE CEILINGS. WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT NATO'S BASIC POSITION REMAINS THE SAME: AN MBFR AGREEMENT SHOULD COMPRISE THE IDEA OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "COMMON AND COLLECTIVE" CEILING FOR EITHER SIDE'S FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. THE WEST INSISTS ON THE TERM "COLLECTIVE" BECAUSE IT DOES NOT INTEND TO GIVE THE USSR ANY SAY IN THE ORGANIZATION OF NATO ARMED WITHIN THE COMMON CEILING. THE EAST HAS ALWAYS STRESSED THAT NATIONAL CEILINGS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED (ESSENTIALLY IN ORDER TO CONTROL THE BUNDESWEHR), WHICH

WOULD RESULT IN DENYING A NATO COUNTRY THE POSSIBILITY OF FILLING A GAP CAUSED BY A REDUCITON OF ARMED TROOPS IN ANOTHER MEMBER COUNTRY.

(C) - AS A FIRST STAGE IN POSSIBLY ATTAINING THESE CEILINGS, THE EAST WOULD AGREE TO REDUCTIONS ONLY IN US AND SOVIET GROUND FORCES AND EQUIPMENT IN A FIRST PHASE, AND THESE REDUCTIONS WOULD BE ASYMMETRICAL.

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ACTION ICAE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PA-02 INR-10 ACDA-12 /037 W
-----055089 141655Z /41

O 141611Z JUN 78
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2282
AMEMBASSY BONN

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ACCORDING TO EASTERN SOURCES, THE PACT COUNTRIES WOULD AGREE TO MAKE FIRST-PHASE REDUCTIONS IN FORCES AND EQUIPMENT AS SUGGESTED BY NATO IN ITS LATEST INITIATIVE, IE IN AMERICAN AND SOVIET FORCES, INCLUDING AMERICAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS THEIR LAUNCHING SYSTEMS AND SOVIET ASSAULT TANKS. IT IS NOT SPECIFIED FROM THE SAME SOURCES, HOWEVER, WHETHER THE EAST HAS ACCEPTED NATO'S PRECISE OFFER: THE WITHDRAWAL OF 68 000 MEN AND 1 700 SOVIET TANKS FROM THE REDUCTION ZONE IN RETURN FOR AN AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL OF 29 000 TROOPS AND 1 000 NUCLEAR WARHEADS ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR LAUNCHING SYSTEMS, IE 54 "F-4" PLANES WITH NUCLEAR CAPACITY AND 36 MEDIUM-RANGE "PERSHING-1" MISSILES (FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON THE LATEST NATO INITIATIVE, SEE AN OF 19 APRIL).

HOWEVER, WHILE ACCEPTING THE PRINCIPLE OF MAKING INITIAL ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS, WHICH CONSTITUTES A CONFIRMATION BY THE EAST OF THE NATO OPINION THAT THERE IS A FORCE IMBALANCE IN THE EAST'S FAVOUR IN CENTRAL EUROPE, THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES APPEAR TO BASE THEIR INITIATIVE ON THE FACT THAT NATO HAS ACCEPTED THE EAST'S LATEST DATA ON ITS FORCES IN THE ZONE, IT IS EXPLAINED

AT NATO. WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE STILL
BEING HELD IN VIENNA CONCERNING DATA IN AN ATTEMPT TO
EXPLAIN THE DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE FIGURES PRESENTED
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BY THE EAST AND WEST. WE WOULD NOTE THAT NATO HAS NOT
YET ACCEPTED THE EAST'S FIGURES ON ITS TROOPS IN CENTRAL
EUROPE.

IN ANY EVENT, THE SOCIALIST PLAN, LIKE THE LATEST
WESTERN SUGGESTIONS, IS ONLY APPLICABLE IF THE TWO
ALLIANCES AGREE ON THE EVALUATION OF FORCES PRESENT IN
CENTRAL EUROPE, THAT IS TO SAY THAT IN THE EYES OF THE
EAST, THERE MUST BE "APPROXIMATE EQUALITY" BETWEEN THE
FORCES OF THE TWO ALLIANCES.

(D) THE EAST'S PLAN ACCEPTS THE NATO PROPOSAL THAT ALL
"DIRECT PARTICIPANTS" SHOULD UNDERTAKE FROM THE FIRST
PHASE TO MAKE REDUCTIONS IN A SECOND-PHASE AGREEMENT.
THIS IS REALLY A CONCESSION ON NATO'S PART SINCE THE
USSR HAD DEMANDED SUCH A PRIOR COMMITMENT TO ENSURE
THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MAKE REDUCTIONS AFTER THE
INITIAL REDUCTIONS BY THE TWO SUPER-POWERS.

END OF TEXT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, TEXT, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USNATO06024
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780248-0854
Format: TEL
From: USNATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780658/aaaabyen.tel
Line Count: 198
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 346ee888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ICAE
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2346674
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: \"ATLANTIC NEWS\" REPORT ON MBFR
TAGS: PARM, SOPN, XH, XT, MBFR
To: ICA MBFR VIENNA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/346ee888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014